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Attorney Docket No.: 02CON382P-CIP
Application Serial No.: 10/655,698

List of Claims:

MAR 28 2008

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of encoding [[each]] pictures in a sequence of pictures using an encoder, said method comprising the steps of:

assigning, by said encoder, a pre-decoder buffer removal time to [[said]] a picture;
constraining, by said encoder, an initial arrival time of said picture into said pre-decoder buffer by selecting, for said picture, a number of bits, wherein the time-equivalent of said number of bits is no greater than a difference based on said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said picture and said initial arrival time of said picture into a pre-decoder buffer;

compressing, by said encoder, said picture to generate said number of bits;
transmitting, by said encoder, said picture to said pre-decoder buffer in compliance with said initial arrival time being no earlier than a difference between an encoder processing time of said picture and an encoder processing time of a previous picture.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
allocating a first number of bits for compressing said picture and one or more number of bits for compressing one or more future pictures, wherein said future pictures are in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said [[current]] picture;
determining, based on said numbers of bits in said allocating step, which of said future pictures will be in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said picture;
changing said first number of bits for compressing said picture to allocate a final number

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of bits for compressing said picture if said changing is needed to prevent pre-decoder buffer overflow or underflow; and

compressing said picture using said final number of bits.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
determining a first limit on a number of bits for compressing said picture and one or more number of bits for compressing one or more future pictures, wherein said future pictures are in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said [[current]] picture; and
compressing said picture using a first number of bits, wherein said first number of bits complies with said first limit.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of claim 3, wherein said first limit is an upper limit and said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 3, wherein said first limit is lower limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of:
determining a second limit on a number of bits for compressing [[a current]] said picture;
wherein said first limit is an upper limit and said second limit is a lower limit, and wherein said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

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Claim 7 (Original): The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of:
determining an upper limit and a lower limit on said first number of bits for compressing
said picture, wherein said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit and said first
number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): An encoder for encoding a picture in a sequence of
pictures, said encoder comprising:
a compressor configured to compress said picture to generate a number of bits;
wherein said encoder is configured to assign a pre-decoder buffer removal time to said
picture;

wherein said encoder is further configured to constrain an initial arrival time of said
picture into said pre-decoder buffer by selecting, for said picture, said number of bits, wherein
the time-equivalent of said number of bits is no greater than a difference based on said pre-
decoder buffer removal time of said picture and said initial arrival time of said picture into a pre-
decoder buffer;

a transmitter configured to transmit said picture to said pre-decoder buffer in compliance
with said initial arrival time being no earlier than a difference between an encoder processing
time of said picture and an encoder processing time of a previous picture.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The encoder of claim 8, wherein said encoder allocates
a first number of bits for compressing said picture and one or more number of bits for

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compressing one or more future pictures, wherein said future pictures are in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said [[current]] picture;

wherein said encoder determines, based on said numbers of bits, which of said future pictures will be in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said picture;

wherein said encoder changes said first number of bits for compressing said picture to allocate a final number of bits for compressing said picture if needed to prevent pre-decoder buffer overflow or underflow; and

wherein said compressor compresses said picture using said final number of bits.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The encoder of claim 8, wherein said encoder determines a first limit on a number of bits for compressing said picture and one or more number of bits for compressing one or more future pictures, wherein said future pictures are in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said [[current]] picture; and

wherein said compressor compresses said picture using a first number of bits, wherein said first number of bits complies with said first limit.

Claim 11 (Original): The encoder of claim 10, wherein said first limit is an upper limit and said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit.

Claim 12 (Original): The encoder of claim 10, wherein said first limit is lower limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

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Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The encoder of claim 10, wherein said encoder determines a second limit on a number of bits for compressing [[a current]] said picture, and wherein said first limit is an upper limit and said second limit is a lower limit, and wherein said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

Claim 14 (Original): The encoder of claim 9, wherein said encoder determines an upper limit and a lower limit on said first number of bits for compressing said picture, wherein said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A computer readable medium encoded with a computer program including computer executable instructions for use in an encoder for encoding each picture in a sequence of pictures, said computer program comprising:

code for assigning, by said encoder, a pre-decoder buffer removal time to said picture;

code for constraining, by said encoder, an initial arrival time of said picture into said pre-decoder buffer by selecting, for said picture, a number of bits, wherein the time-equivalent of said number of bits is no greater than a difference based on said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said picture and said initial arrival time of said picture into a pre-decoder buffer; and

code for compressing, by said encoder, said picture to generate said number of bits.

code for transmitting, by said encoder, said picture to said pre-decoder buffer in

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compliance with said initial arrival time being no earlier than a difference between an encoder processing time of said picture and an encoder processing time of a previous picture.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the computer program further comprising:

code for allocating a first number of bits for compressing said picture and one or more number of bits for compressing one or more future pictures, wherein said future pictures are in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said [[current]] picture;

code for determining, based on said numbers of bits, which of said future pictures will be in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of said picture;

code for changing said first number of bits for compressing said picture to allocate a final number of bits for compressing said picture if needed to prevent pre-decoder buffer overflow or underflow; and

code for compressing said picture using said final number of bits.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the computer program further comprising:

code for determining a first limit on a number of bits for compressing said picture and one or more number of bits for compressing one or more future pictures, wherein said future pictures are in said pre-decoder buffer at said pre-decoder buffer removal time of [[said]] current picture; and

code for compressing said picture using a first number of bits, wherein said first number

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of bits complies with said first limit.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The computer readable medium of claim 17, wherein said first limit is an upper limit and said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The computer readable medium of claim 17, wherein said first limit is lower limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The computer readable medium of claim 17, wherein the computer program further comprising:

code for determining a second limit on a number of bits for compressing [[a current]] said picture;

wherein said first limit is an upper limit and said second limit is a lower limit, and wherein said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein the computer program further comprising:

code for determining an upper limit and a lower limit on said first number of bits for compressing said picture, wherein said first number of bits is not higher than said upper limit and said first number of bits is not lower than said lower limit.